WHIRRAKEE

October 2014 Vol. 35 No. 9

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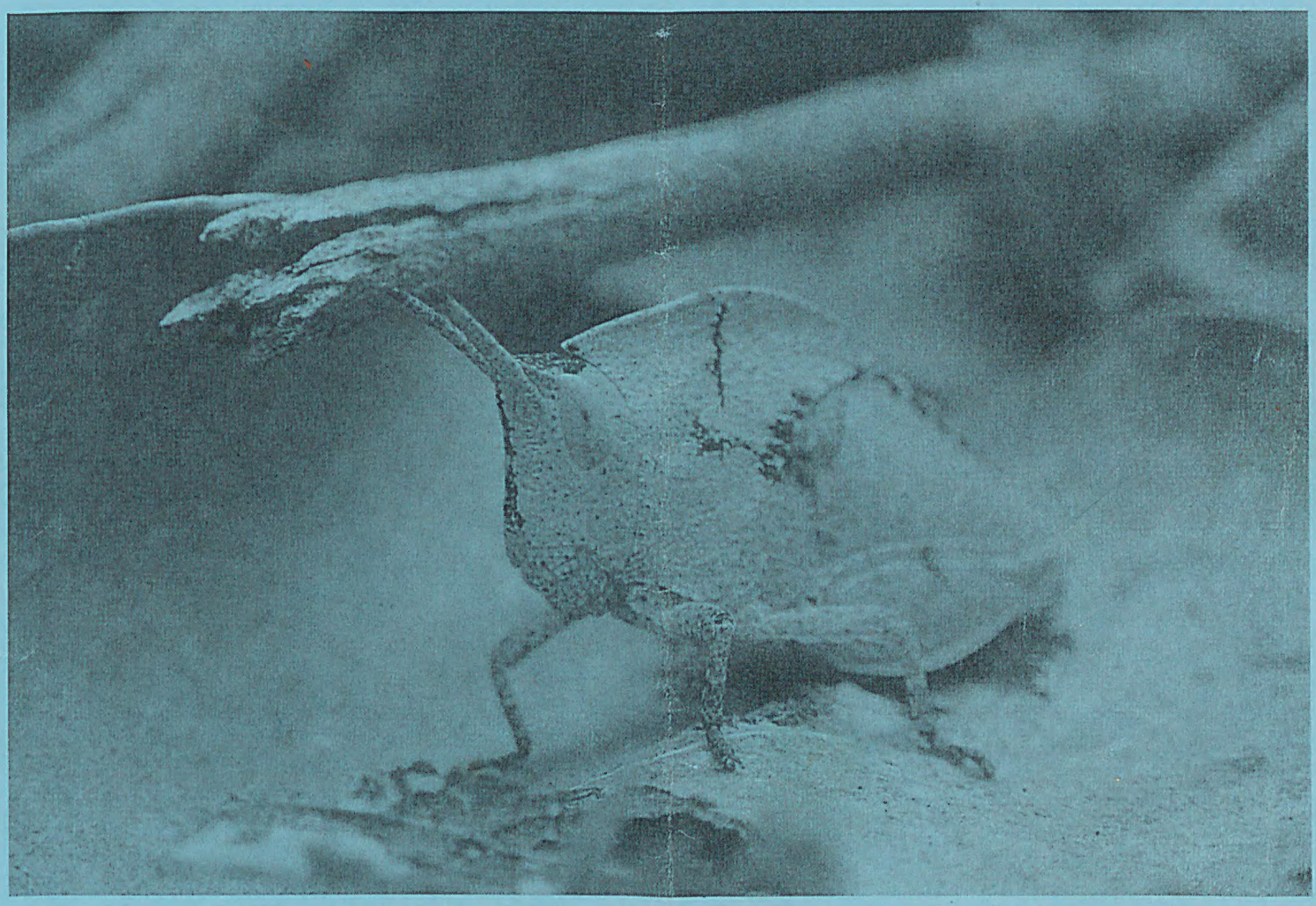

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $40; Family $50; Concession: Single $35; Family $40. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $40.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with members sharing their recent natural history observations. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Alistair White, Kerrie Norris, John Lindner, Diana Collier, Jan Orr, Devi Shanty, Simon Hay

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188. To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 35, No. 9, October 2014
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*), which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions should be posted or e-mailed to the editor at least two days prior to the last Wednesday of the month. They will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although space restrictions occasionally require shortening of articles or holding them over till the following edition of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
A big welcome to another year of field-natting, especially if you are new to the club. Unlike the tax year or the calendar year, the BFNC year starts in spring. Traditionally, especially if you were not at the Annual General Meeting, you might have expected to see the President's and Treasurer's 2013/2014 report in this edition, but spring is such a busy time and I hope you don't mind waiting for another month for these reports. From what I have seen and heard so far, many of our wild-flowers are not at their best this spring, perhaps because of the very dry autumn, but looking at the range of photos in this edition, there is no shortage of splendour and variety. As always, thank you so much to the many photographers that have contributed. I was lucky enough to visit the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens recently – what an experience! If you have not been there, make sure you put it on your list of places to visit this spring.

Front page photographer: Sarah Floyd
The front cover image shows an immature Gumleaf or Dead Leaf Grasshopper, *Goniaea* sp. The instars vary in colour and are usually well-camouflaged in the leaf litter by looking like a dead leaf themselves. Some species resemble gum leaves, others wattle leaves, but they all have the characteristic ridge behind their head. This one could be *G. australasiae*.

Short Notices

October Club Excursion

When: Sunday 12th October (all day)
Theme: Botany & Birds (Kamarooka Forest)
See back page for details about this excursion.

Speaker syllabus for 2014/2015

by Ben Goonan

As the syllabus coordinator I try to organise a diverse range of fabulous speakers for our general meetings. I would like to thank all those who have provided feedback and encouragement. The process involves searching for potential candidates across every topic I can think of and contacting many (many) people. Out of all this research and coordinating falls the speaker schedule for the year. Please feel free to contact me if you have any ideas for potential speakers (including yourself or another member) or general topics you would like covered. While the final schedule is the result of "first in", with preference given to those from out of town, it's also great to have some local talent on hand. Please remember, it may take some time to find the right person for a suggested topic, so please be patient. Also, I like to be organised and usually have things in place well in advance. Looking forward to hearing some great suggestions.

Late winter at Mt Kooyoora

by Dale Little

In past years, many of our visits to Mount Kooyoora have coincided with the flowering of the Golden Moth orchids (*Diuris lanceolata*). We have also enjoyed several of the walks (especially the Eastern and Southern Lookout Walking Tracks) and have managed, over time, to see a variety of orchids and other flowering plants. Often, as we have passed the depressions on the granite surfaces, we wished we knew more about the mosses, lichens and other water loving plants that colonise these.

As the weather has been so spring-like during the past week, we headed to the Mount to see what we had missed due to our usual late season visits. The acacias were a picture throughout the park - Varnish Wattle (*Acacia verniciflua*), Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) and Gold Dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*). The showy mint bush (*Prostanthera nivea*) was beginning to flower. Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*) carpeted much of the lower area of the park

What was special for us on this visit was our sighting and identifying of the Bluebeard Caladenia (*Caladenia deformis*). We feel we have seen this before but have failed to distinguish it from the more common blue caladenia (*Caladenia caerulea*). There were a number of isolated specimens along the lower section of the entrance road.

On the lookout walk we found numerous basal leaves of what we think are spider orchids and onion orchids (possibly *Microtis unifolia*). A number of *Pterostylis* species were seen. The most prolific were the Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*) with many small colonies visible at the base of the granite rocks and along the roadside. We also saw several large Striped Greenhoods (*Pterostylis robusta*) and one fine specimen of the blunt greenhood (*Pterostylis curta*). We were surprised to find very few leopard orchids (*Diuris pardina*) as they have been abundant in Junortoun and on One Tree Hill during our recent rambles.

Flowering at Kamarooka

by Rod Orr

An interesting species was flowering very well in the Kamarooka section of the National Park about two weeks ago. Over decades past, there was considerable confusion over its correct ID with many records named *Eriostemon diffusa* (now *Philotheca diffusa*) - now, this species is recognised as very rare and recent searches for it have not rediscovered this species.

The plant shown in the photo on the right is *Philotheca angustifolia* - its tiny, narrow leaves can be seen at this magnification.

The October club excursion is headed for Kamarooka, so why not consider joining it?

Caladenia filamentosa

....also flowering at Kamarooka is the 'Daddy-long-legs' Orchid, *Caladenia filamentosa*. Two sub-species grow side by side under Kamarooka Mallees in just a few places in the Kamarooka section of the National Park. They flower much better after really wet Winters, so this year is a fair bit below their best, unfortunately. Still, both sub-species can be found after a lot of searching. They are small Spider Orchids, only about 10 - 15 cm tall with the flowers only 5 cm or so across. As you can imagine, the light has to be just right to have much chance of seeing them in the shade of mallee vegetation.

(photos by Rod Orr)

Pale-flowered sub-species

As you also can imagine, it only takes a tiny breath of wind to make the filamentous petals whip around, and..., it is nearly always windy whenever you try to take close-up photos out in the wild.

Above: **Kooyoora late winter orchids** (photos by Dale Little)
left: Large Striped Greenhood, *Pterostylis robusta*,
middle: Blunt Greenhood, *Pterostylis curta*;
right: Bluebeard Caladenia, *Caladenia deformis*

Left: *Philotheca angustifolia*, Burnside Road, Kamarooka

Right: Bearded Greenhood, *Pterost. plumosa* (by Sarah Floyd, One-Tree Hill)

Wildlife at Mandurang

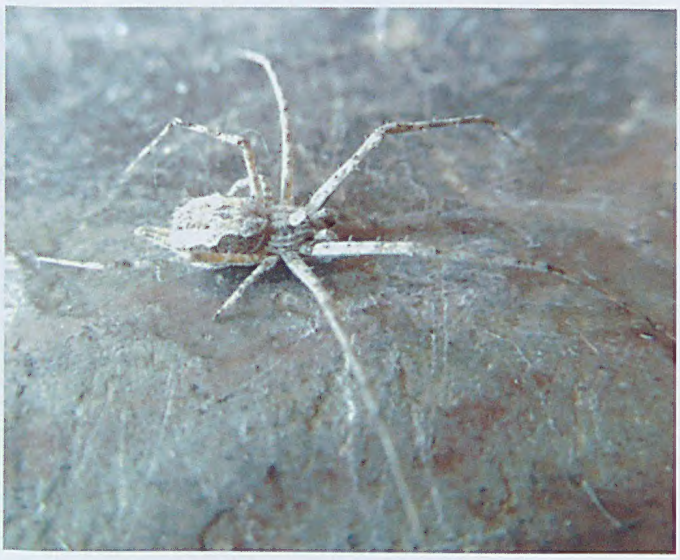
Earlier this year, Karen Thomas photographed 2 of the family of 8 choughs who had adopted her… (leftt). They flew in each morning if Karen called them, and sat on her decking rails. The choughs are currently nesting nearby and have been seen chasing off local kookaburra and brown falcon.

This time last year Karen also noticed how this Rufous Whistler (top right) had taken a liking to the car mirrors… Karen hopes it is back this year. Was the Rufous Whistler looking at himself in the mirror, or was it watching the spiders that seem to love car mirrors, or perhaps it had an interest in the spider's victims?

Left: Scarlet Robin, September 21, Storeys Road (photo by Michael Angove)

Below right: Fickert's two-tailed spider (photo by Jenny Shield, March 2014). This species is normally found on bark, where it blends with the background. The egg sac is on a stalk attached to bark. At this time of the year, female spiders are not yet mature, but the males are already maturing and waiting till the females are ready to mate.

Below left: the tiny *Jotus auripes* (white moustache jumping spider, collected in July this year (JS) (note the beautiful feathery palps of this male)



Some more early Spring images (photos by Sarah Floyd)
Top left: colour version (!) of front cover image, showing the amazing camouflage of this grasshopper (nymph of *Goniaea* sp.),
top right: Red Swainson Pea, *Swainsona plagiotropis* from Terrick Terrick,

middle left: Scented Sundew, *Drosera whittakeri* from Vaughan Springs,

Bottom: Pink Fingers, *Caladenia carnea* from Lyell Forest

August and September mosses (by John McCallum)
Funaria hygrometrica is a moss that colonises burnt areas.

Above and left: *F. hygrometrica*, Diamond Hill, near Walter Road early August 2014. Large areas of burnt ground are carpeted; the sporophytes are still green and many still retain their turned-up calyptra.
By September 13, the sporophytes were starting to brown off (right photo), changing the overall appearance of the colonies.

John has also kindly offered identification for the unidentified mosses in the September *Whirrakee*, see opposite page.

Below: this Jacky Lizard was photographed by Sarah Floyd at Lyell Forest in mid-September

Spring Bird Photography workshops with Chris Tzaros and Geoff Park

Saturday 11th October, the first for early birds (7.30am - 12.30pm), with the afternoon session commencing at 1.30pm and concluding at 6.30pm.

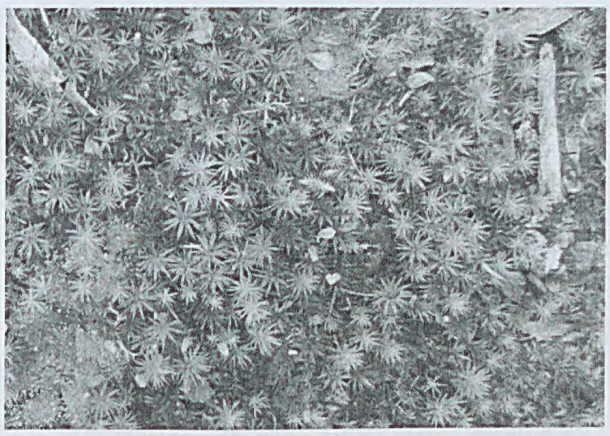
Each workshop is limited to 10 participants at a cost of $100. You can email me to book a place at: geoff.park@naturaldecisions.com.au

For more detail, see September *Whirrakee*

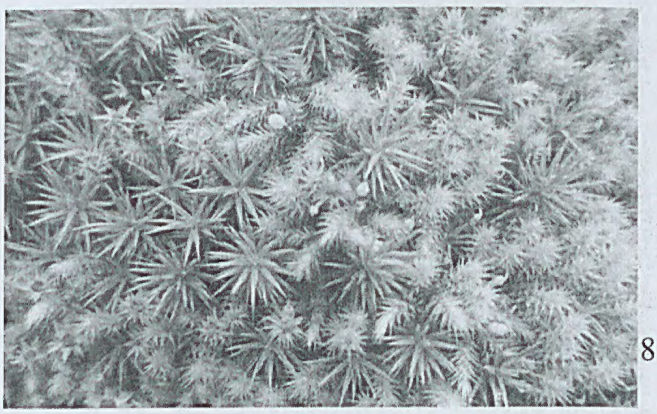
September moss identifications

Here are John's McCallum's identifications of the Grampians moss photos that were published in *Whirrakee* for September 2014. The position of the picture refers to last month's page 7.

The 'left hand picture' (part shown in b/w below) shows *Polytrichum juniperinum*, an often seen and easily identifiable species, which everyone should learn. The plants resemble miniature spruce or juniper plants.



The 'upper right photo' (partly shown in b/w below) shows plants of the same species scattered amongst *Bruetelia affinis*. Features to look for in this species are the overall bright green colour and the reddish stems. Also visible here are the reddish male "flowers", really bundles of antheridia.



The plant in the 'lower left photo' (b/w section shown below) is probably not a moss but a leafy liverwort, most likely a member of the genus *Chiloscyphus*.

Thank you John. It is great when IDs can be made/confirmed/corrected in this way.

Report of Excursion to Sedgwick Sunday 14/09/14

by Anne Bridley

Subject: birds, botany

Leaders: Anne Bridley, Glenise Moors

Participants: 16 people: Pam and John Land, Matt Comer, Judy Milner, Helen Hickey, John McCallum, Mrs McCallum, Leon Schoots, Helena Slawson, Elaine Mathison, Alan Spence, Glenise Moors, Hennie Spence, Kerrie Norris, Liz Martin and myself.

Excursion: our first stop was at the Sedgwick Hall where we admired a large Yellow Box and had a brief discussion about a large Box Mistletoe growing on a River Red Gum.

Then, we car pooled and travelled to the corner of Barty and Myer Tracks in the Sedgwick SF, where we had a pleasant botanical walk down to our lunch spot in a gully.

The forest here has been heavily logged, most trees being coppiced, and it has been burned in places at some stage. There is little shrubby understorey for the most part, but a wide variety of small plants kept people happy.

Highlight of the day was the patch of Gnat Orchids, which were flowering on top of a rocky ridge.

After lunch we had a brief stroll up the hill and cudgelled our brains about some very small members of the Asteraceae. We also

found a little flat, where someone may have once lived. There were the remains of a small stone-lined well and old fruit trees and many garlic plants gone wild.

Thanks to Glenise Moors for keeping a bird list, Matt Comer for the plants and to Kerrie Norris for being whipper-in.

Bird List for BFNC September Excursion to Sedgwick

Brown Goshawk Galah
Long-billed Corella Musk Lorikeet
Eastern Rosella Fantailed Cuckoo
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Crested Shrike-tit Rufous Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush Rufous Songlark
Superb Fairy-wren Buff-rumped Thornbill
Striated Thornbill Varied Sittella
White-throated Treecreeper
Brown Treecreeper Red Wattlebird
Little Friarbird Noisy Miner
Fuscous Honeyeater Brown-headed Honeyeater
Mistletoebird Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote White-winged Chough
Dusky Woodswallow Australian Magpie
Grey Currawong Australian Raven

Plant list for Sedgwick excursion BFNC September 2014 *= introduced

Apiaceae
Daucus glochidiatus Austral carrot
Hydrocotyle callicarpa Small Pennywort
Hydrocotyle laxiflora Stinking Pennywort
Apocynaceae
Vinca major Blue periwinkle*
Asteraceae
Brachyscome perpusilla Tiny Daisy
Cassinia arcuata Drooping Cassinia
Craspedia variabilis Common Billy-buttons
Hypochaeris sp. Flat weed*
Lagenophora sp. Bottle Daisy
Leptorhynchos squamatus Scaly Buttons
Microseris sp. 3 Yam Daisy
Millotia tenuiflora Soft Millotia
Ozothamnus obcordatus Grey Everlasting
Senecio sp. Fireweed
Solenogyne dominii Smooth Solenogyne
Stuartina muelleri Spoon cudweed
Triptolodiscus pygmaeus Common sunray
Xerochrysum viscosum Sticky everlasting
Campanulaceae
Wahlenbergia stricta Tall bluebell
Chenopodiaceae
Einadia hastata Saloop salt-bush
Crassulaceae
Crassula sieberiana Sieber Crassula
Cyperaceae
Carex appressa Tall sedge
Dillenaceae
Hibbertia exutiacies Tangled guinea flower
Droseraceae
Drosera macrantha Climbing sundew
Drosera peltata Tall sundew
Drosera whittakeri Scented sundew
Epacridaceae
Astroloma humifusum Cranberry Heath
Brachyloma daphnoides Daphne heath
Fabaceae
Daviesia ulicifolia Gorse Bitter pea
Glycine clandestine Trailing Glycine
Hovea heterophylla Common hovea
Geraniaceae
Geranium sp. x2
Pelargonium rodneyanum Magenta Stork's bill
Goodeniaceae
Goodenia blackiana Primrose Goodenia
Haloragaceae
Gonocarpus tetragynus Common raspwort
Juncaceae
Juncus sp. Rush
Luzula meridionalis Common wood rush
Liliaceae
Allium sativum Garlic*
Arthropodium strictum Chocolate lily
Hypoxis sp. Yellow star
Thysanotus patersonii Twining Fringe-lily
Wurmbea dioica Early nancy
Loranthaceae
Amyema miquelii Box Mistletoe
Mimosaceae
Acacia acinacea Gold-dust wattle
Acacia baileyana Cootamundra Wattle *
Acacia paradoxa Hedge Wattle
Acacia pycnantha Golden Wattle
Myrtaceae
Eucalyptus camaldulensis River red gum
Eucalyptus leucoxylon Yellow gum
Eucalyptus macrorhyncha Red stringybark
Eucalyptus macrocarpa Grey box
Eucalyptus polyanthemos Red box
Eucalyptus tricarpa Ironbark

Orchidaceae
Caladenia carnea Pink fingers
Caladenia gracilis Musky Caladenia
Cyrtostylis reniformis Small gnat orchid
Glossodia major Wax- lip orchid
Microtis sp. Onion orchid
Pterostylis sp. Greenhood orchid
Pterostylis nutans Nodding Greenhood
Thelymitra sp. Sun orchid
Oxalidaceae
Oxalis sp.
Oxalis purpurea Large-flower wood-sorrel*
Oxalis pes-caprae Soursob*
Pittosporaceae
Bursaria spinosa Sweet Bursaria
Cheiranthera cyanea Blue finger flower
Plantaginaceae
Plantain sp.
Poaceae
Briza maxima Quaking grass*
Pteridaceae
Cheilanthes sp. Rock fern
Ranunculaceae
Ranunculus sp. x2
Ranunculus sessiflorus Annual buttercup
Rosaceae
Acaena echinata Sheep's Burr
Rubiaceae
Asperula conferta Common Woodruff
Scrophulariaceae
Veronica plebeia Trailing speedwell
Thymelaeaceae
Pimelea humilis Common rice flower
Pimelea linifolia Slender Rice flower
Xanthorrhoeaceae
Lomandra filiformis

September general meeting: 'Understanding the role dispersal plays in restoring species diversity to streams damaged by agriculture'
Speaker: Prof Barbara Downes University of Melbourne

summarized by Sabine Wilkens

Lakes and rivers contain a disproportionate amount of biodiversity compared to other habitats, but degraded riverine landscapes due to fragmentation, clearing, fertilizer and pesticide use and water overuse has led to diminished biodiversity in streams, especially those surrounded by agricultural land. Hughes Creek in Central Victoria is one such stream that exhibits a definite gradient in terms of biodiversity and habitat quality, with upstream being 'good' (detritus present, riparian cover, depth, moderate temperatures, connectivity), to 'degraded' (lack of detritus, shallow channel filled with sediment, extreme temperature variations and lack of surfaces to colonise).

The question Barbara Downes, Jill Lancaster and their team were trying to answer was whether the lack of biodiversity at the degraded end is due to lack of suitable environmental conditions, or due to lack of dispersal options from the better creek sections upstream.

To answer this question, the team planted pairs of garden stakes (each pair about 30cm apart) in experimental sites downstream, with control sites (no garden stakes) in the same areas. They then collected detritus (in the form of leaf litter and organic refuse) and released many bags of this in upstream Hughes Creek. This debris eventually got caught in the space between the paired stakes in the experimental sites. After this, the team monitored biodiversity at regular interval until one year after the detritus release.

The results showed that after only 12 months, biodiversity at the degraded creek sites had markedly increased in the experimental plots (in contrast to the control plots). As the physical conditions, which classically were thought of as limiting the biodiversity downstream, had been left largely unchanged, this result showed that routes of dispersal and surfaces for aquatic animals to settle on are more important in this case than the predominant (and seemingly hostile) physical conditions. It was uplifting to see that so little input (pairs of garden stakes driven into the creek bed) can have such a large effect in increasing biodiversity, not just for aquatic organisms, but also for flying adults, like dragonflies. If the biodiversity improvements are shown to be long-term, this could be a very low cost restoration measure, that all landholders and landcare groups can do themselves. Such findings always leave the audience on a high – so thank you, Barbara!

Diary

All Club meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High St Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday October 8 7.30pm
Prof Mark Elgar, Evolution and Behaviour Group, University of Melbourne ill talk about 'Chemical communication in insects: signals, cues and receivers'. All are welcome.

October Excursion: Sunday 12 October
(the Sunday after the monthly meeting)
Leader: Matthew Comer
Location: Kamarooka Forest (Part of Greater Bendigo National Park)
Themes: Botany and Birds
Duration: Whole Day
Meeting Time/Place: 8.30am at Clubrooms in Old High Street
Return: by 4pm
Car Pooling: Yes. Passengers will be expected to contribute to fuel costs
Driving distance: Approx. 85km return
Toilets: There are no toilet facilities available in the area
Bring: Appropriate clothing for the conditions, morning tea, lunch, drinking water, sun protection, binoculars, camera, notebook, handlens etc.
Hazards: loose rocks, branches, snakes. Ground will be mostly flat to gently sloping with vegetation dense to fairly open.
Summary: We will drive to the Kamarooka forest and make a number of stops at places of interest, which may involve short walks. We will visit differing vegetation types from dense mallee to open grey box woodland and the associated different flora and fauna.

Family Nature Club
The Nature Club activities will continue in 2014, please listen out for announcements or check out their website.
Registration:
Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443-1326
http://bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com/

Bendigo Native Plant Group meeting.
All interested people are welcome to come along. Meeting starts at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of the month, Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall.
Next meeting: 21st of October
Please also note: 10th Biennial FJC Rogers Seminar – *Brachychiton* and Allied Genera
Saturday and Sunday 18th and 19th October
All Seasons International Conference Centre, 171-183 McIvor Road, Bendigo. More information at: http://www.apsvic.org.au/FJCR/
RSVP: Sandy Birch, Bendigo Native Plant Group phone: 0400 149 319
bendigonativeplantgroup@yahoo.com.au

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.
WRIN meetings held on the 1st Saturday of the month at 1pm the Golden Square Senior Citizens Hall

...a free partnership event with The Goldfields Library and The City of Greater Bendigo and part of our National Bird Week spring program:
Birdlife of the box-ironbark country, presented by Geoff Park
Date: **Saturday 18th October 2014**
Time: 11.00am – 12.30pm
Activity room 1 & 2 at the Bendigo Library
Geoff will speak about the birdlife of the box-ironbark country and the role that birds play in this unique ecosystem. He will introduce you to some of the more familiar box-ironbark species, provide some thoughts on how to find and identify common and not so common species, and discuss the seasonal effects on bird diversity and abundance. Geoff is a keen natural history photographer and will illustrate his talk with many of the birds that can be found across the variety of box-ironbark habitats of central Victoria.
Book your visit www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au